

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

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ACTION SS-25

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C O N F I D E N T I A L KABUL 4445

EXDIS

E. O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PDIP, PFOR, AF, US
SUBJECT: RECOMMENDING THAT PRESIDENT DAOUD BE INVITED
TO MAKE A STATE VISIT TO THE UNITED STATES

1. SUMMARY. THIS MESSAGE RECOMMENDS THAT PRESIDENT CARTER INVITE PRESIDENT MOHAMMAD DAOUD OF AFGHANISTAN TO MAKE A STATE VISIT TO THE UNITED STATES NEXT WINTER. SUCH A VISIT WOULD FURTHER OUR INTEREST IN SUPPORTING AFGHAN INDEPENDENCE AND REGIONAL STABILITY AND WOULD DEMONSTRATE OUR CONCERN FOR ONE OF THE LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES OF THE WORLD. NO AFGHAN HEAD OF STATE HAS VISITED THE UNITED STATES SINCE 1963, AND DAOUD HIMSELF HAS NOT BEEN IN THE UNITED STATES SINCE 1958, WHICH WAS DURING HIS FIRST ADMINISTRATION, ALMOST TWENTY YEARS AGO. END SUMMARY

2. I BELIEVE THE TIME IS PROPITIOUS TO INVITE PRESIDENT DAOUD TO PAY A STATE VISIT TO THE UNITED STATES. THE VISIT SHOULD TAKE PLACE AFTER THE SHAH'S VISIT, WHICH I UNDERSTAND IS SCHEDULED FOR NOVEMBER, BECAUSE THE SHAH WOULD NOT TAKE KINDLY TO DAOUD'S PRECEDING HIM. THE ONLY OTHER REGIONAL LEADER WHO MIGHT BE TROUBLED BY A DAOUD VISIT WOULD BE BHUTTO, AND I ASSUME THERE IS NO POSSIBILITY THAT HE WILL BE INVITED UNTIL AT LEAST AFTER NEXT OCTOBER'S PAKISTAN ELECTIONS. MOREOVER, AS IS NOTED
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BELOW, DAOUD'S VISIT COULD BE SATISFACTORILY EXPLAINED TO BHUTTO AS PART OF OUR EFFORT TO ENHANCE REGIONAL STABILITY, A GOAL TO WHICH THE LATTER SUBSCRIBES.

3. A DAOUD VISIT WOULD INDEED BE SUPPORTIVE OF OUR PRINCIPAL POLICY OBJECTIVES WITH RESPECT TO AFGHANISTAN. IT WOULD DEMONSTRATE OUR CONTINUING INTEREST IN AFGHAN

INDEPENDENCE. IT WOULD GIVE US AN OPPORTUNITY TO RE-ITERATE OUR INTEREST IN REGIONAL STABILITY, PARTICULARLY IN IMPROVED RELATIONS BETWEEN AFGHANISTAN AND PAKISTAN, AND BETWEEN AFGHANISTAN AND IRAN. AS AFGHANISTAN IS ONE OF THE POOREST COUNTRIES IN THE WORLD, DAOUD'S VISIT WOULD GIVE US AN OPPORTUNITY TO UNDERLINE OUR INTEREST IN ASSISTANCE TO SUCH COUNTRIES AS HAS BEEN STATED AT THE RECENT LONDON SUMMIT AND PARIS OECD MEETING. FINALLY, HIS VISIT WOULD GIVE US AN OPPORTUNITY TO ENCOURAGE HIM ALONG THE PATH OF CONSTITUTIONALISM ON WHICH HE EMBARKED EARLIER THIS YEAR AND TO EXPRESS HIGH-LEVEL AMERICAN INTEREST IN CERTAIN SPECIFIC ISSUES, SUCH AS THE CONTROL OF THE AFGHAN NARCOTICS TRAFFIC.

4. DAOUD WANTS TO VISIT THE UNITED STATES. THE AFGHAN FOREIGN MINISTER HAS STATED SO EXPLICITLY TO ME. HE HAS BEEN TO THE SOVIET UNION TWICE SINCE HE BECAME PRESIDENT IN 1973, AND NO DOUBT WISHES TO RESTORE THE TRADITIONAL BALANCE IN AFGHAN POLICY TOWARD THE TWO SUPERPOWERS. HE WOULD WISH TO DISCUSS U.S. ASSISTANCE FOR AFGHANISTAN (WHICH WOULD GIVE US AN ADDITIONAL OPPORTUNITY TO EXPLAIN WHAT WE CAN AND CANNOT DO). HE MAY WELL FEEL THAT AFGHANISTAN HAS BEEN SLIGHTED BY THE U.S. BECAUSE NO AFGHAN HEAD OF STATE HAS BEEN IN THE U.S. SINCE FORMER KING ZAHIR IN 1963, AND, AS NOTED
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ABOVE, DAOUD HIMSELF LAST VISITED THE U.S. WHEN HE WAS PRIME MINISTER IN 1958.

5. FOR ALL THESE REASONS, I HOPE DAOUD CAN BE PUT ON THE STATE VISIT CALENDAR AS SOON AS POSSIBLE AFTER THE SHAH'S VISIT AND THAT AN INVITATION CAN BE EXTENDED TO HIM IN THE NEAR FUTURE.
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